

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: NATO, IT, PORG
SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON ITALY AND NATO

1. WE HAVE JUST SEEN DREW MIDDLETON NYT ARTICLE ON
NATO AND ITALY UNDER NEW YORK DATELINE OF JANUARY 15
WHICH APPEARED IN JANUARY 16 INTERNATIONAL HERALD
TRIBUNE. IN ARTICLE, HEADLINED "NATO IS REVIEWING
ITALIAN SECURITY," MIDDLETON ALLEGES THAT CONTINGENCY
PLANNING IS PROCEEDING IN NATO REGARDING ITALIAN SITUATION.
TO SUPPORT THIS CLAIM, HE CITES COMMENTS FROM "WELL
PLACED SOURCES" AND "SOURCES AT NATO HEADQUARTERS NEAR
BRUSSELS." A NUMBER OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH STORY'S
"SOURCES" DISCUSS ARE IN FACT OF CONSIDERABLE CONCERN
TO NATO OFFICIALS AND ALLIES HERE. HOWEVER, FROM THIS
MIDDLETON MAKES UNJUSTIFIED LEAP TO CLAIM THAT CONTINGENCY
PLANNING IS ACTUALLY UNDER WAY WHICH TO BEST OF OUR
KNOWLEDGE IS NOT RPT NOT TRUE. JANUARY 16 GUARDIAN
ATTICLE BY BRUSSELS CORRESPONDENT JOHN PALMER CLAIMS
SIMILARLY THAT "NATO ALREADY HAS CONTINGENCY PLANS OF
ITS OWN TO DEAL WITH ANY FUTURE COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION

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PAGE 02 USNATO 00463 162002Z

IN THE GOVERNMENT OF MEMBER STATE." WE NOTE ALSO
THAT MIDDLETON USES DECEMBER 22, 1977 NATO PUBLIC STATE-
MENT OF CONCERN ABOUT MANPOWER REDUCTIONS IN ITALIAN
ARMED FORCES AS LINKED (IN FASHION NOT SPECIFIED BY
MIDDLETON SINCE OF COURSE THERE IS NO LINKAGE) TO
ALLEGED CONTINGENCY PLANNING ON ITALIAN PROBLEM.

2. NATO PRESS SPOKESMAN CALLED MISSION THIS MORNING TO EXPRESS SURPRISE AT MIDDLETON ARTICLE, SAYING HE HAS ALREADY HAD PRESS QUERIES RE ACCURACY OF REFERENCE TO CONTINGENCY PLANNING. IN ASKING US WHETHER MISSION HAS RECEIVED ANY PRESS GUIDANCE RE MIDDLETON PIECE, WHICH HE WOULD CONSIDER HELPFUL, HE TOLD US THAT LINE HE BASICALLY TAKING IS TO KNOCK DOWN STORY BY RESPONDING THAT HE KNOWS OF NO SUCH PLANNING AND THAT IT IS IN FACT CONTRARY TO ALLIANCE POLICY. MISSION HAS NOT YET HAD ANY DIRECT QUERIES OF ITS OWN, BUT WE ARE OPERATING ON ASSUMPTION NATO SPOKESMAN'S LINE IS CORRECT ONE. ANY THOUGHTS DEPARTMENT HAS WOULD BE WELCOME.

3. DURING DISCUSSION WITH MISSION SECURITY OFFICER AND POLAD JANUARY 16, NATO SECURITY DIRECTOR ABIDIAN CONFIRMED THAT THERE IS NO SPECIAL SECURITY PLANNING REGARDING ITALY GOING FORWARD WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF. SECURITY INSPECTIONS ARE CONDUCTED IN THE VARIOUS NATO MEMBER COUNTRIES ON AN ANNUAL BASIS. ABIDIAN VOLUNTEERED THAT ITALY IS NORMALLY INSPECTED IN THE LATE SUMMER OR EARLY AUTUMN. HE ALSO VOLUNTEERED THAT THERE ARE NO PLANS TO SPEED UP THIS CYCLE WITH REGARD TO ITALY. GLITMAN

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